



Ahimsā

Newsletter of the Charleston Buddhist Fellowship

September 2005 (2549)

Tolerance in Religion

BY FRANCIS STORY (1910—1971)

The religions in which it is a cardinal point of faith that they, and they alone, hold the key to salvation and eternal life, place themselves in a very special relationship to one another and to the whole of mankind. Their claim being one that involves the ultimate and absolute good of many will not, if it is held in all completeness and sincerity, admit of modification; nor can it be given a place that is secondary to anything else. Just as the brief span of life must be considered negligible against the measureless ocean of eternity, so the insignificant pattern of human affairs must necessarily be subordinated to the sole and ultimate good, which is of far greater consequence.

This type of religion sprang from tribal origins. In the first place, the salvation it offered — the hope of heavenly reward — was for the members of the tribe exclusively; its god was the unseen leader and real chief of the tribe. He might be a former chief deified, or his character might be purely mythical; or it might happen that a powerful local nature-spirit would be adopted as the god. However that might be, the god and the creed with its exclusive salvation were a binding force in the tribal units of primitive society. Combined, they instilled loyalty as a continuing influence through all the triumphs and reverses of tribal life. The human chiefs died or were killed in battle, but it did not matter; the real chief, the supernatural leader and protector, of whom the mortal chief was only the earthly representative, lived on. And so long as he lived, the tribe was held together.

Gradually, the tribes swelled and became

nations, and the concept of the priest-king developed. It was the priest-king, as representative of the national deity, who made the laws and, from time to time, led the armies into war. Through their human surrogates, the gods did battle with one another, and the defeated tribe would be assimilated by the conqueror. The assimilation would take place in different ways, according to the degree of exclusiveness inherent in the tribal cult or the relative superiority or inferiority of victors and vanquished. Sometimes, there was identification, as when Jupiter and Amon became the composite deity, Jupiter-Amon, the horned god of Thebes; but as often, the god of the subjugated nation was outlawed. Among the Semites, Baal was driven out by Jehovah (Yahweh) and became a devil. In this particular instance, a real advance in civilization was made, for Jehovah, with all his faults, was certainly a superior type of god to the Baal who demanded human sacrifices and obscene rites of worship. Human sacrifice to Jehovah was abolished at a quite early date.

There are few statements so true that they do not need, some time or other, to be contradicted. Nevertheless, it can be stated as a

Continued on page 3

Contents

Tolerance in Religion	1
Programs	2
Purpose of the Charleston Buddhist Fellowship	2
Dhamma Study Group	2
Watchfulness	9
How to Deal with Someone Who is Doing Wrong	9
Membership	10

Activities

The Charleston Buddhist Fellowship:

- Conducts informal seminars on Buddhism.
- Prepares and distributes free educational material.

Programs

The Charleston Buddhist Fellowship sponsors the following programs:

- Instructions in meditation.
- Dhamma study groups.
- Retreats (at IMC-USA).

There are no fees for any of the activities or programs offered by the organization. Seminars are designed to present basic information about Buddhism to the general public — anyone may attend. However, study groups and meditation instructions are open to members only.

Retreats last ten days and are coordinated through IMC-USA in Westminster, MD (410-346-7889). Fees are set by IMC-USA. Advance registration is required.

One-on-one discussions about one's individual practice or about Buddhism in general are also available upon request. These discussions are accorded confidential treatment. There is no fee for one-on-one discussions. ■

Purpose of the Charleston Buddhist Fellowship

The Charleston Buddhist Fellowship is an educational organization whose purpose is to preserve and promote the original teachings of the Buddha in the West.

The Charleston Buddhist Fellowship actively encourages an ever-deepening process of commitment among Westerners to live a Buddhist way of life in accordance with the original teachings of the Buddha.

The Charleston Buddhist Fellowship provides free educational material to those who want to learn about Buddhism and about how to put the teachings of the Buddha into practice.

The goals of the Charleston Buddhist Fellowship are:

1. To provide systematic instruction in the *Dhamma*, based primarily on Pali sources.
2. To promote practice of the *Dhamma* in daily life.
3. To provide guidance on matters relating to the *Dhamma*, its study, and its practice.
4. To encourage the study of the Pali language and literature.
5. To maintain close contact with individuals and groups interested in promoting and supporting the foregoing goals. ■

Dhamma Study Group

An on-going Dhamma study group focusing on the basic teachings of the Buddha is meeting Sunday mornings at 11:00 o'clock at the home of Allan Bomhard (940 Rutledge Avenue, Charleston, SC 29403-3206). Call (843) 720-8531 for directions to Allan's home. There is no fee to participate in this group. ■

Continued from page 1

general principle that the gods improved as man improved. And necessarily so, for they were his own creation, and his conception of their natures was drawn from his own. But because of a tribal instinct that seems to be inherent in man, the national gods continued to be national gods. Those who did not accept and submit to them were outsiders, fit objects of suspicion. They were a threat to the social integration that rested upon a single authority.

This idea continued to exercise its influence in the Semitic religions even after some of them branched off and claimed to be universal instruments of salvation. Their universality consisted in the goal of bringing together all mankind under the one authoritative power by the promise of salvation — a salvation that was reserved for the followers of the “true God” and none other. Thus, the promise given to the Jews under the covenant of the Old Testament became broadened by Jesus into the promise to all men that they should be partakers of eternal glory, on condition that they believed in and followed him: “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me...shall never die.” But, at the same time: “There is none cometh unto the Father *except* through me.”

So the principle of the exclusiveness of salvation was preserved, but it had come to rest on the basis of conversion instead of on birth in one particular group of the human race. A new moral concept of good and evil was introduced, and it caused a breach that could be closed only in one way: by converting the unbelievers and making them one body with the faithful. By this means was ensured the perpetuation of the religious authority on earth and the welfare of the converts in the life to come.

If all who died outside the faith were condemned to eternal damnation, it was clearly the duty of the believers to save them at all costs. There could be no question of tolerating other religions, which, by definition, were evil. Since there was only one way, one “strait and narrow

gate”, men must be driven through it and along it as sheep are herded to the pasture. There was only one true Shepherd, and this assumption gave him a prerogative that no ordinary shepherd has: he was authorized to coax or force into his own flock as many sheep from outside as he could get.

From such a viewpoint as this, tolerance could never be seen as a virtue, but only as a reprehensible weakness of faith or a disregard for the welfare of others. In the result, there came to be two chief motivations behind the effort to convert: on the part of the more sincere, a genuine desire to save souls; on that of the more worldly-minded, the aim of extending the power and domination of their particular church. Since human motivations are always rather tangled, there may also be a third, intermingled with these: the need to convince oneself by convincing others. In actual missionary practice, it is usually men and women of the sincere type who are used as tools by those whose real aim is domination.

But whatever the motive or mixture of motives, the central fact on which it all rests is the teaching of exclusiveness of salvation. The more firmly this belief is held, the less possibility there is of tolerance. It is only when the religious conviction weakens that the bare possibility of tolerating other faiths can make an entry.

Such a weakening, however, is a weakening of the total structure so far as revealed religion is concerned. The mandate, “Thou shalt worship none other god but me”, is imperative. In Hinduism, where in the words of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, “all paths lead unto me”, the monotheistic problem is dealt with somewhat differently. It is assumed that all the many gods are but the manifestations of one eternal, immutable being, who accepts the sacrifice (*yajña*) offered to each. One who denies the existence of such a being is not thought to be excluded from ultimate salvation; the hope for him lies somewhere else along the endless path of transmigration.

The Semitic religions hold no such hope. To die an unbeliever is to die in an irreversible state of sin. It is not my purpose here to point out the injustice and illogicality of this view; it is

already apparent to everyone who has thought seriously about it with an unbiased mind. Yet, for the past two thousand years, it has been the prevailing religious idea in the West, and it still shapes the religious thinking of many people. As might be expected, it remains strongest where the control of religious thought is most authoritarian, and where belief has held most closely to the primitive doctrines, unaffected by scientific or historical criticism. It is there we see in its utmost purity the pattern of missionary activity already referred to: the utilization of the sincere believer by those whose real objective is the extension of power.

Judaism has to a great extent retained the tribal structure of religion. It does not seek to make converts but is content to preserve itself, a nation of the chosen, within or alongside the nations outside the covenant; and therein lies the strength that has upheld it throughout the centuries, in the face of persecution and oppression. It is the great spreading branches of Judaism, the limbs that have outgrown the trunk, that must be seeking ever fresh roots for themselves. Some of them have, in the course of time, detached themselves almost completely from the parent stem and have substituted new doctrines, such as the worship of a female deity (practically a restoration of the archaic cult of a Mother-Goddess) for the worship of the original Jehovah. But with all of these, the doctrine of salvation which is conditional on the acceptance of one church and one creed is fundamental. It cannot be discarded without wrecking the entire theological edifice. To a religion of this kind, tolerance can come only with disintegration.

What is the hope of reconciliation between such mutually exclusive creeds? Attempts have been made from time to time to reconcile them through syncretism. But the offspring of such cross-fertilization is a pallid hybrid — so pallid, so wan, so utterly lacking in the vitality that springs from a single belief, that it has little chance of survival. Of all such attempted syncretisms, none of them has been to any degree successful. Some have died out altogether; others

have remained alive on the lunatic fringe of society, among people who are incapable of recognizing inconsistencies; others have completely reversed their original aim and become more exclusive, more intolerant, than those they set out to supersede. As a general rule, when a man says that he believes in the truth of all religions, he really means that he can believe in none.

In the case of most theistic religions, therefore, tolerance can only be regarded as an unhealthy symptom, a sign of approaching dissolution. The robust believer does not understand it; to him, the prime duty of life is to draw others into his fold, and for this purpose, he will use any means whatsoever. If by torture a man may be coerced into accepting the “true faith”, and so saved for eternity — let him be tortured. If he is obdurate and likely to be a source of infection to others — and particularly if, like Giordano Bruno, he is intelligent enough to be listened to with respect — let him be killed. Rather one man should die than a million should be led into damnation by his heresy. That is the warped morality that inspired the Inquisition, and it is still with us. Only weakness prevents it from functioning as in former days.

Accepting the initial position, that salvation is granted only on acknowledgement of one particular god and church, the conclusion is logical enough. The warping of the moral sense comes about not through a willful perversion but through an initial error, blindly accepted and conscientiously carried to its extreme.

In Buddhism, the initial error never existed, for several reasons. The first is that Buddhism did not begin as a tribal religion. It was not born of, nor involved in, the politics of survival and expansion. The Buddha’s world-view took all life as its province and all the situations of living beings as its concern. Its great theme was the universality of suffering (*dukkha*), spread out in space and time illimitably; its goal, to bring that suffering to an end. For a universal disease, there must, the *Bodhisattva* reasoned, be a universal remedy, and he set out to discover it. So

Buddhism was a universal religion from its very inception, the moment of the Buddha's Enlightenment. It never had to pass through the stages of growth from the tribal to the universal, those stages in which so many inconsistencies are bound to appear and so many original doctrines have to be modified or else abandoned. There was never any exclusiveness in it, neither the exclusiveness of race, caste, nor even of human life. Every animal has its place in the grand cosmic order; even an insect can finally attain liberation.

In the second place, man was shown to be the master supreme of his own destiny. On him alone it rested whether he were to enjoy happiness or suffer misery in the life to come. His future lay not on the arbitrary will of a jealous god, the intercession of a priest or the surrender of his reason to any special set of dogmas; it lay solely with his own actions. The question of who was to be saved and how — whether by faith or works, and if by faith, what particular kind of faith — never arose in Buddhism. True, there is but one way open to final cessation of suffering, the way of release from the passions, which only the Buddhas teach: but there are many lives during which it may be sought, and no being could be eternally damned. If none was chosen, none was rejected; and the choice was vested in the living, thinking, acting man.

If a man is not yet ready to receive the whole truth, let him go his way. His journey towards it will be as long or as short as he himself makes it. A Buddha can only point the way. He cannot traverse it for another, and still less will He compel another to take it before he is ready. For it is a Way that cannot be forced on another; its whole significance is bound up with the act of choice, the independent will to take that way in preference to all others.

Furthermore, the Buddhist system of mental cultivation insists that one should put one's own house in order before venturing to interfere with another's life. "Can one who is himself in the mire help out another?" the Buddha asked and gave the answer: "No, such a thing can in no way

be".

So, with no basis for spiritual compulsion and no desire for worldly dominance, Buddhism remains today exactly what it was when the Buddha first made His announcement that He had found the path to liberation. That which is a defect in other religions — tolerance of the beliefs of others — is in Buddhism a virtue that is primary, inherent, and unalterable. But now we must proceed to a closer examination of what the word "tolerance" really implies.

Buddhist ethico-psychology shows that every wholesome state of mind conceals within itself a near enemy. Thus, in the practice of *mettā-bhāvanā*, universal loving-kindness, the near enemy is sensual love. So every virtue is accompanied by some defect — even vice — that is so similar to it in outward aspect that, with a little help from the rationalizing mechanism of the mind, it may slip by disguised as a virtue itself. It is sometimes not at all an easy matter to distinguish between the true virtue and the enemy that lies hidden within it, or overshadows it as a potentiality. In order to be sure about this, it is necessary to analyze the virtue, discover what really constitutes it, and the point, if any, where it is likely to slip over and become, if not a vice, a weakness.

What, then, do we really mean by "tolerance"? In the true and exact sense, tolerance means the ability to live with others who hold divergent views and perhaps follow different ways of life that arise from such views, without interfering with them or attempting to force one's own ideas and ways on them. Just as a living organism tolerates and adapts itself to a certain degree of variation in its environment, or to the intrusion of other organisms, so in society, man has to learn to tolerate others whose opinions and habits are not the same as his own and may even be distasteful to him. It is the practice of noninterference, of live-and-let-live.

So far, so good. We must remark that this definition of tolerance does not assert that we must or should ourselves adopt the beliefs or practices of others, when these are alien to our own and our

own are seemingly better. It is only necessary that we should admit to others the right we claim for ourselves. But this is the first point at which, if the definition of tolerance is not clear, the practice of it may slip over into becoming a weakness. In practicing tolerance, people sometimes carry it to the extreme of trying to incorporate into their own beliefs those of others. It is a weakness to which Buddhists are more prone than most people and is often the result of a misguided excess of amicability. But in other instances, this “near enemy” of tolerance is actually its opposite; it springs from an inability to tolerate anyone else’s ideas unless one can, by some mental gymnastics, make them one’s own. It is a proof of the inability to agree to disagree. One who is so constituted finds it the only way in which he can resolve the difficulty without conflict.

The problem that arises next is rather more difficult to settle, and perhaps it is one that cannot be satisfactorily settled by a general formula. Its solution must depend upon circumstances, and the probabilities of good or evil to which they give rise. It is this: is moral condemnation incompatible with tolerance?

It is often said (and even more often written) that the Buddha never condemned. This idea originated with Western students of Buddhism who were at once struck by the difference between the condemnation of other faiths which was so marked a feature of their own religion, and the complete absence of such condemnation in Buddhism. To them, it was a new, and very surprising idea. They were accustomed to the belief that, if one had the proper faith in one’s own religion, one automatically condemned all others, for the reasons we have seen. They were rightly impressed by the liberal outlook of Buddhism and made much of it.

It is certainly true that the Buddha never condemned after this fashion. But, unfortunately, by careless handling, the idea came to bear a wider and looser meaning, and one that is quite different from what was originally intended. It was taken to mean that the Buddha never, in any circumstances, condemned by criticism anything

or anyone.

This is demonstrably untrue. Among the things the Buddha condemned in precise and unmistakable terms were the superstitious and animal sacrifices of the Brahmins and their pretensions to caste superiority; the erroneous doctrines of the *Titthiyas*, or dissident sects; all forms of cruelty and immoral behavior; and, last but not least, the shortcomings of some of His own Bhikkhus. I do not intend to pack this article with quotations and references; anyone can verify the facts by reading the *Suttanta* and *Vinaya* for himself. Perhaps the strongest term of reproof the Buddha used was “Foolish man!”, but it was enough. In the simile of the horse-tamer, the Buddha gives three methods by which horses may be dealt with: some horses the trainer teaches gently; others harshly, while still others he kills. Similarly, the Buddha says that some disciples He teaches gently, others harshly, and still others, he kills. And how does the *Tathāgata* kill a disciple? When the *Tathāgata* finds that a disciple is incorrigible and cannot or will not learn, He “kills” him by refusing to give him instructions. In other words, the Buddha lets the man go his own way.

In dealing with erroneous and misleading opinions, there is evidence of forceful criticism, as in the *Majjhima Nikaya*, where we find the robust expression *Paripūra-bāla-dhamma*, “a full-blown doctrine of fools”, applied to the belief in a permanent, unchanging soul (*Attā-vāda*). Neither in the *Theravāda* nor the *Mahāyāna* texts is any support to be found for the picture of the Buddha as a negative and ineffectual personality — a Teacher who never disagreed with anyone and never engaged in controversy —, which has become so popular with certain writers. The Buddha’s tolerance was that of a strong and vigorous mind which understands the limitations of other minds and, whilst not compromising with untruth, does not attempt to force truth into unwilling ears. It should never be confused with the weakness and humility that Christianity exalts but few Christians try to cultivate.

True Buddhist tolerance, then, should, as far as possible, follow the pattern set by the

Buddha Himself; that is to say, it should allow others to hold and to follow whatever beliefs they choose, so long as they are incapable of realizing any higher truths. But it does not insist that Buddhists should approve of what others believe or give their assent to it when it goes against the basic teachings of the Master. Neither does it demand that Buddhists should submit to pressures from the followers of other religions who try to impose their own ideas by force where they can and by persuasion where they cannot.

This brings us to the crux of the problem as it exists for many Buddhists today. An organism will tolerate what is inimical to it only up to a certain point, the maximum threshold of toleration set by its nature. After that point is reached, it reacts, making a determined stand for survival. So it is with any group of human beings who are exposed to dangerous influences from within or without. If those influences are such as to constitute a menace to their survival, or are showing signs of reaching that point, the reaction is bound to follow. When, for example, it is a case of truth being swallowed up by authoritarian dogma, or the right of freedom to think and act being lost in subjection to highly organized pressure groups, tolerance of the threat ceases to be a virtue and turns into a source of danger. In this imperfect world, truth and falsehood, together with the infinitely graduated half-truths and half-falsehoods that lie between, will always be found side by side; but if any religion claiming a monopoly of truth seeks to eliminate all others, the ethics of Buddhism do not require that Buddhists should stand aloof and allow the supreme Teaching to be obscured or driven out of human memory. Truth cannot be destroyed, but the understanding of it can; history has shown this to happen time and again. The sole measure of progress is the human mind, and to shackle it is to put back the clock.

In permitting Buddhism to become identified with a conception of tolerance that is quite erroneous, Buddhists have given their opponents a stick for their own back. And the stick is not infrequently used by Buddhists on one

another. It has come about that any emphatic declaration of Buddhist doctrine which happens to conflict with that of some other creed raises a howl of accusation — “Intolerance!” Any protest, however mild, against misrepresentations of Buddhism, or any reply by Buddhists to attacks on their religion, provokes the same parrot-cry: “Intolerance!” This word is the standard formula of all those who, sheltering behind what they suppose to be a prohibition in Buddhism, claim the privilege of writing and speaking against the *Dhamma* with impunity. If a Buddhist should answer them in kind, promptly comes the taunt: “he is not a true Buddhist, he is intolerant!”

It is a fact that the Buddha said, “If anyone should speak against Me or My Doctrine, you should not become angry. If you become angry, you are no follower of Mine”. But it was against the anger that He was giving this warning, for anger is an unwholesome state of mind, no matter what provokes it. The Buddha was certainly not speaking against the right His followers shared with all other men to state their creed and reply to criticisms of it. Had His reproof been directed against that, the Buddha would have been reproving Himself, for He replied to His critics often enough. In what other way could He have vindicated and spread His Teaching? Certainly not by saying to everyone who raised objections, “Yes, you are right”, in the tone of submissiveness that some present-day Buddhists would have us adopt. *The Buddha never apologized for being a Buddha.*

The degree of tolerance that should be shown to those who transgress important moral laws, under the impression that they are doing no wrong, raises a problem of a different kind. The Brahmins of the Buddha’s day slaughtered cattle wholesale, no doubt in the firm belief that what they were doing was a highly praiseworthy and religious act, pleasing to the god not less than it was profitable to themselves. So far as abstaining from forcible intervention went, the Buddha can be said to have tolerated the practice. He did not whip the Brahmins out of the temples as Jesus whipped the money-changers out of the temple in Jerusalem. But He assuredly did not tolerate the

custom in the wider sense, by abstaining from comment and thereby giving it a tacit approval. If the current idea of tolerance demands that care must be taken never to hurt the feelings or susceptibilities of others in any way whatsoever, it does not appear that the Buddha interpreted it in that way. The Brahmins must often have smarted under the irony of sermons such as the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* and the sharp rebuke given a Brahmin youth inflated with the pride of birth, in the *Ambattha Sutta*. There was no righteous indignation in the Buddha's reproofs; they were delivered dispassionately and objectively. For this reason, they must have been all the more effective.

Not to condemn what is morally reprehensible could prove a very dangerous and costly thing, both for the individual and for society as a whole. A society that is too lenient, that withholds moral condemnation to an extreme degree, stands in danger of allowing evils to proliferate in its midst. To prevent this, two things are necessary: a sense of balance and proportion — a due regard for the middle way — and the ability to distinguish between what is morally bad because it is an infringement of a universal law, and what is considered bad merely on grounds of tradition or local custom.

In any case, between the legitimate criticism of things that are harmful and the intolerance of a religion that will not permit others to hold a different belief, there is a wide and deep gulf. The two belong to distinct and separate orders of thought and behavior. It is through not recognizing this fact that so much confused thinking has arisen. The misconception has been detrimental to the Buddhist outlook in the past, and its influence is still active today.

One of the crucial tests of the civilized man is to be able to live in amity with those of whose religions, customs, and total world-view are different from his own; in a word, the ability to agree to disagree. It is this which constitutes the real tolerance of Buddhism. But what happens when the Buddhist has to live with those whose own intolerance makes tolerance in others

a dangerous weakness? That is the concrete problem that faces many Buddhists today. Even in Buddhist countries, there are unseen pressures at work on the task of turning men away from the *Dhamma*. The only answer to this menace seems to lie in an ideological resistance that is sufficiently strong to prevent the situation from degenerating into one that can be met only by force. To link Buddhism with nationalism is presumably the first and spontaneous reaction, and it has already taken place in certain Buddhist countries. But, at the best, it is an unhappy solution; it presents us with the discouraging phenomenon of a natural process in reverse. The universal religion becomes, after long centuries, a tribal one. At its worst, it could be disastrous to the further spread of Buddhism. There is no greater obstacle to the spread of a religion abroad than its identification with a particular nation or political grouping of mankind. When it is so identified, it naturally takes responsibility in some measure for all the defects of that particular group. People who would gladly embrace Buddhism as a doctrine of universal character, free from all nationalistic associations, hesitate to do so when it becomes specifically the religion of this country or that. This may be so strong that it becomes equivalent to a feeling of having changed one's nationality. They feel that, in some obscure way, they are taking on the identity of the group they associate with that religion.

A connection has been introduced that militates against the realization that Buddhism is a way of life and a world-view that transcends nationality, race, and language. A reaction of this kind is seen among African-Americans, some of whom, disgusted with Christianity because it is "the white man's religion", have turned to Islam. No intelligent Westerner would be prejudiced against Buddhism because it is an Asian religion; but he might considerably hesitate to adopt the "State Religion" of some country that had failed to demonstrate the superiority of its creed in practice.

It seems, therefore, that Buddhists as a whole should work on a new and distinct pattern of tolerance — or rather, of dealing tolerantly with

those who are not tolerant. Better perhaps than a narrow nationalism would be an international framework of solidarity between Buddhists of different countries. Within such a framework could be built up a strong ideological unity to resist pressures from the outside. But before this can be accomplished, there must be clarification of ideas as to what constitutes tolerance in the true sense, what are its requirements and what its limitations. This article has been an attempt to provide an introduction into that much misunderstood subject. All it invites the reader to do is to review his own ideas of what is meant by Buddhist tolerance, and, if he is a Buddhist, to be on his guard against allowing others to use the current misinterpretation of the word as a lever against him and the Buddhist doctrine and way of life. ■

This essay is reprinted from *The Buddhist Outlook: Essays, Dialogues, Poems. The Collected Writings of Francis Story (The Anagārika Sugatānanda), Volume I.* Kandy, Sri Lanka: The Buddhist Publication Society (1972), pp. 227—239. The current version has been lightly edited, mainly to correct spelling and punctuation errors in the original.

Watchfulness

BY JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI (1895—1986)

The basis of meditation is watchfulness, both of the objective and the subjective worlds. It is seeing, watching, listening, without word, without comment, without opinion — attentive to the movement of life in all its relationships. It is the continual emptying of the mind of thought and experience, allowing the stream of consciousness to flow freely without thought seizing on any of its elements; it is living and dying from moment to moment.

Watchfulness demands hard work and the highest form of discipline — not conformity, not obedience, but a discipline which comes from constant awareness, not only of things outside of oneself but also inside. One must just watch and be aware of every thought, feeling, and reaction,

without judging, comparing, approving, condemning, or evaluating them in any way. When one tries it, when one does it, one finds that there is a tremendous release of energy, there is an opening of the door into spaciousness, there is the awakening of bliss.

In meditation, the mind penetrates and understands the entire structure of the self and the world that thought has put together; and the very act of seeing and understanding confers freedom from it, for meditation destroys everything, nothing whatsoever is left, and, in this vast, unfathomable emptiness, there is creation and love. ■

How to Deal with Someone Who is Doing Wrong

We must not allow people to do wrong to us. Whenever someone does something wrong, he harms others at the same time that he harms himself. If we allow him to do wrong, we are encouraging him to do wrong. We must use all of our strength to stop him, but with only good will, compassion, and sympathy for that person. If we act with hatred or anger, then we only aggravate the situation. But we cannot have good will for such a person unless our mind is calm and peaceful. So, we must practice to develop peace within ourselves, and then we can solve the problem.

“Putting others first” does not mean making a doormat of yourself. It is just the opposite. Rather, “putting others first” means putting their welfare first, putting their growth first, which is often very different from doing what they want. One of the necessary accomplishments of love is to be able to say no tenderly and persuasively.

Any abuse, anger, or threat belongs to the one who is uttering it. We do not have to accept it. ■



CHARLESTON BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP
940 Rutledge Avenue ♦ Charleston, SC 29403

Charleston Buddhist Fellowship

Membership

The Charleston Buddhist Fellowship encourages sincere practitioners to become members and to become active in promoting and supporting the activities of the organization.

Members receive mailings and are given priority and discounts at teachings and events. Membership contributions help support the on-going activities of the organization and help cover operating expenses such as producing, printing, and mailing notices of events and special activities, mailbox fees, cost of preparing and producing teaching material, etc.

The membership fee is \$10.00 per person per month, if paid monthly, or \$100.00 per person per year, if paid annually. Checks should be made payable to “Allan R. Bomhard.”

Membership Form:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Home phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Return forms to: Charleston Buddhist Fellowship ♦ 940 Rutledge Avenue ♦ Charleston, SC 29403-3206